 **OFFICE OF
COMMUNITY
SERVICES
HOUSING
SPECIALIST TEAM**

Housing Specialists:
Valerie Strosser & Melanie Gay
*Sr. Manager of Services for Families
Experiencing Housing Crises:*
Remy Harris

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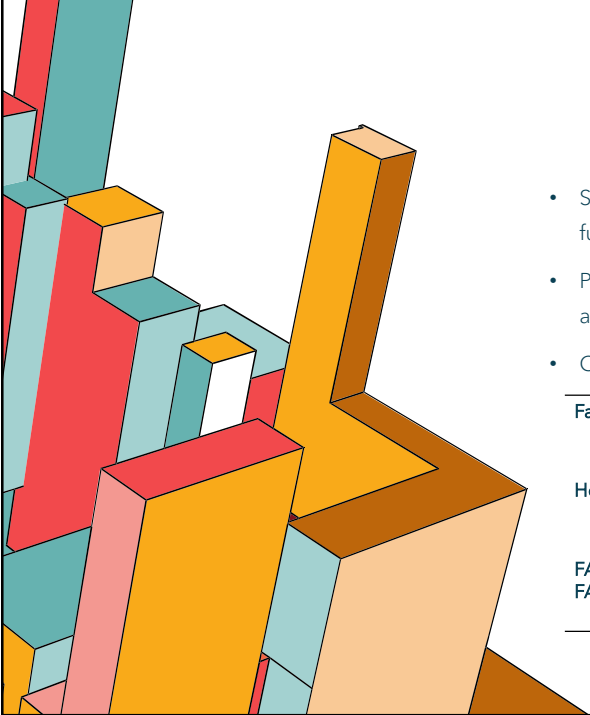
**TODAY'S
DISCUSSION**

- Overview of Housing Specialist Team's Work
- Snapshot of Active Referrals
- Referral Process
- Support Provided to Families
- Common Housing Challenges
- Potential Housing Outcomes
- Q&A

9-28-22



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WHAT IS A HOUSING SPECIALIST?


- Serve as primary information sources on affordable housing for OCS-funded providers and partner agencies
- Provide direct assistance to families to help resolve housing crises and prevent family homelessness
- Current referral sources:

Family Support Centers	CHP Pediatric Clinic Social Workers
Hello Baby Priority Providers	DHS Family Resource Navigators (ELRC)
FACT Providers (TFI and Macedonia FACE)	Other (HCEF, schools, OBH education liaisons, other community partners)

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SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVE REFERRALS



107 Active Referrals


Sources:

Family Support Center	85
UPMC CHP	13
Hello Baby	9



75 Resource-Only Referrals

- Current housing situation is safe and stable
- Family is requesting housing search assistance or connection to housing resources

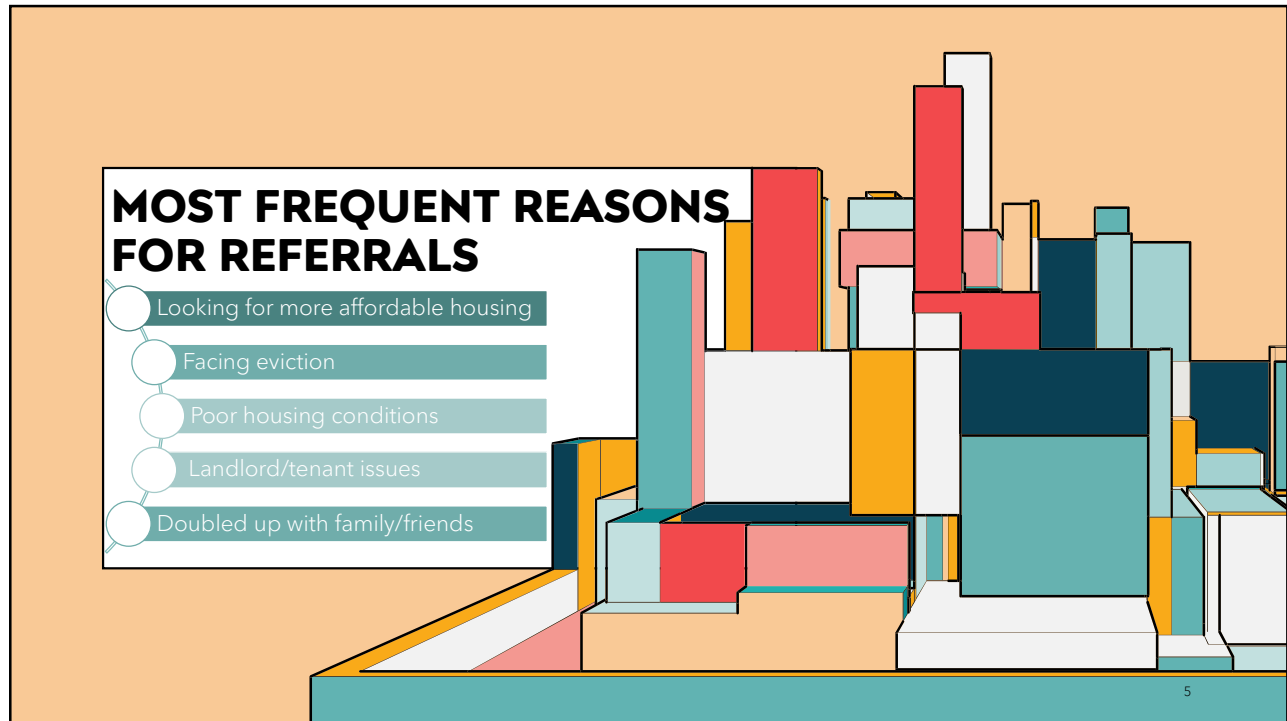


32 Crisis Referrals

- Unsafe and/or uninhabitable living conditions
- Active DV/IPV
- At risk of imminent (within 60 days) homelessness

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REFERRAL PROCESS

1. Referral is submitted electronically
 - **Housing Specialist Referral Form** must be completed - emailed referrals are not accepted.
2. HS completes initial system involvement review
 - Past and current service utilization is reviewed - referral is DIVERTED or ACCEPTED
 - When a family is not **actively** in need of housing support, is in emergency shelter, or already enrolled in a housing program, they are diverted back to the referral source or re-connected with other assigned worker or housing provider
3. HS completes housing needs assessment
 - Information is gathered to learn more about the current situation, past housing history, and to identify barriers to securing or maintaining housing. HS determines priority level.

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INITIAL MEETING WITH FAMILY

Information on family's situation is collected to determine best course of action.



Household Information

- Household composition
- Household income
- Rental history
- Special accommodations (service animals)

Current Housing Situation

- How long can they stay in current property?
- Behind in rent, in eviction process?
- Utility issues?
- Landlord/tenant issues, lease expiring
- Safety issues in neighborhood

Housing Preferences

- Geographic location
- Housing type
- Proximity to public transit, employment, etc.
- School district

Housing Barriers

- Past evictions
- Poor/no credit
- Criminal/legal history

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HOUSING CHALLENGES

- Families living in unsafe and uninhabitable homes (no heat/water, pests, electrical and sewage issues)
- Families identifying current neighborhood as unsafe
- Challenges for families seeking market rate housing:
 - Lack of affordable rental units
 - Landlords denying potential tenants who have poor credit scores or earn less than 3x rental amount
- Challenges for families seeking income-based housing:
 - Lack of available HCV units (especially 3+ bedroom units)
 - Long waitlists for LIPH
 - Criminal and credit histories are barriers to eligibility

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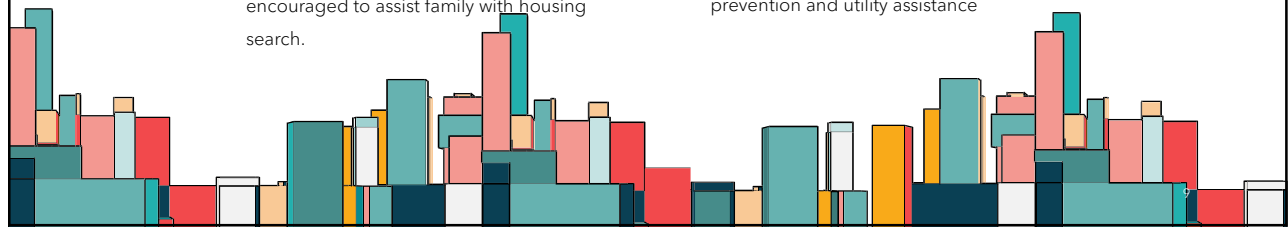
HOW ARE FAMILIES SUPPORTED?

RESOURCE-ONLY

- Family is provided individualized housing resources and guidance based on their current situation and desired outcome.
- HS checks in with family regularly to monitor progress and offer additional housing leads and resources.
- Referral source is updated as needed and encouraged to assist family with housing search.

CRISIS

- Urgent issues are addressed immediately (unsafe living conditions, DV/IPV)
- Active problem-solving to address barriers, create realistic and safe housing plan
- Hands-on work: dedicated housing search assistance; LL/tenant advocacy & mediation; connection to legal resources, eviction prevention and utility assistance



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TYPES OF HOUSING

Public Housing

- Managed by a Housing Authority
- Tenants typically pay 30% of their income for rent

Low Income Housing Tax Credit

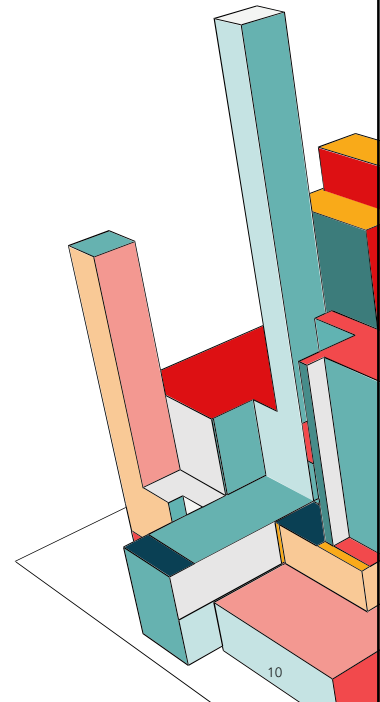
- Rent is based on the median income of the area - more affordable but fixed rental amounts

Subsidized Housing – Section 8

- Housing is subsidized by a Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8)
- Tenant-based or Project-based

Market Rate Housing

- Rent is based on market rates - no subsidies offered



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RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES DURING TRANSITIONS

Experiencing Homelessness:

- Allegheny Link (the front door to accessing housing & homeless services in our county)
 - 1-866-730-2368
 - AlleghenyLink@AlleghenyCounty.US
 - If family does not have a safe place to stay for the evening, they can access vacancies at 6 family emergency shelters
 - Can also screen/refer clients for rental assistance eligibility (moving in or eviction prevention)

Fleeing Domestic Violence:

- Women's Center and Shelter
412-687-8005
- Center for Victims
412-678-4616
- Alle-Kiski Hope Center
1-888-299-4673

Other Resources:

- Genesis House
<https://genesispgh.org/genesis-house/>
- Mary's Place
<https://www.marysplacepgh.org/>



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 An abstract 3D graphic similar to the one on page 11, but with a larger teal base and a more complex arrangement of blocks in shades of red, orange, white, and teal. A small number '12' is visible at the bottom right of the graphic.

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